



Exhibition

29 September – 13 October 2018

(open Mon – Fri 8am-4pm, Sat 10am-4pm)

The Union Coffee House
51 Great George Street
Leeds LS1 3BB

The tennis ball. The essential item in the dogs toy box. The lifespan of the tennis ball. Throw, fetch, endless running, slobbering on the nylon shell, sticky fingers. The ball that is lost. The ball that is chewed apart. The ball that is mown to pieces by the park keeper. There they lay, in their grassy grave. What stories they could tell, of the play they had with their dog, back when they were the number one toy.

DOG FRIENDLY VIEWING

Saturday 6 October 2018

4pm–6pm

The critical theory behind The Tennis Ball

My personal practice revolves around walking and photographing the same or similar views. In a way I'm collecting images and evidence of where I have been, and my connection to my environment. I've begun to see this method of documentation as nature's typologies, which are in constant flux. I'm also interested in details we'd probably overlook without closer study - walking slower certainly helps that. I began noticing remnants of tennis balls after the big mowers had been to cut the grass on the field where I walk my dog. I started collecting them. I also discovered tennis balls that had clearly been discarded, destroyed, as well as mown into pieces.

What is the intent and reason behind showing this work? It is both frivolous, hinting at my love for dogs, and on further inspection it not only shows my personal connection to the environment, but the connections humanity has in general. Here is humanity's direct impact on the land we walk - the waste we throw away and neglect, taking our own paths and creating desire lines across fields, where there is landscaping, with all its growing, cultivating, removing, composting - what we bring into the environment and what we remove. The changes we force both knowingly and unwittingly on all the paths we tread.

I am inspired by the typologies of conceptual artists Bernd and Hilla Becher, who produced groupings or classifications of photographic images. There is a complexity running through their photographs, viewed as a single image they may at first appear mundane or peculiar, but collectively they begin to reveal many facets beyond intent and reason, 'The idea', they said once, 'is to make families of objects', or, on another occasion, 'to create families of motifs' - objects or motifs, that is, they continued, 'that become humanised and destroy one another, as in Nature where the older is devoured by the newer'.

More about the Bechers can be found using this link:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/01/photographic-comportment-of-bernd-and-hilla-becher>



Bernd Becher and Hilla Becher
Winding Towers (Britain) 1966–97



Bernd Becher and Hilla Becher
Water Towers 1972–2009



An Ode To Mickey

My dog does not play with tennis balls, he seldom likes to play fetch, he chews hard on his synthetic bones, and brings a gift of a plush doughnut to the door when guests arrive. My dog will not chase after a tennis ball, or bring back a stick that I have thrown, he may play tug with his doughnut, but then runs off to kill the squeak far away from my grabbing hands. My dog does not go mad for running after tennis balls, but give him a doughnut to carry around like a comfort blanket, or a bone to gnaw on and he's happy. My dog does not play with tennis balls.

Dogs as therapy

Since becoming ill 3 years ago, my dog has been a companion and consequently a great emotional support. He has helped by giving me the reason to leave the house, to enjoy nature, and to find a new path to follow. He has helped me to feel connected again, after I felt all was lost.

"Many of us with companion animals will have found ourselves, often unconsciously, deriving comfort, acceptance, and a renewed sense of wellbeing by simply stroking their fur, taking them for a walk, grooming or just talking to them.

From these simple interactions with our animal friends, we are:

- lowering the levels of the stress hormone – cortisol
- increasing the levels of hormones that give:
 - a sense of happiness and bonding (oxytocin)
 - energy (dopamine)
 - that feeling after you have done lots of exercise and enjoyed it (endorphin)
 - elation (phenethylamine)

Recent research has shown how interaction with animals can benefit individuals with a range of mental health issues, including dementia and Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, and trauma." www.scas.org.uk



Mickey, in Kirkstall. not chasing after Tennis Balls

PAYF

The Tennis Ball is a Pay as You Feel event, I am not making any money from this exhibition, however I do need to cover my costs, as someone who is disabled and not currently working, I am grateful for any help I am given. All contributions will be greatly received, and any surplus to these costs will be donated to West Yorkshire Dog Rescue www.westyorkshiredogrescue.co.uk